

running up a huge national debt. Quite simply, reducing the federal government's \$5.6 trillion national debt takes money that is currently tied up in debt and puts it back into the private sector where it can be invested in plants, equipment and other investments that create jobs and economic output.

Federal Reserve Board Chairman, Alan Greenspan, has repeatedly advised Congress that the most important action we could take to maintain a strong and growing economy is to pay down the national debt. Earlier this year, Chairman Greenspan testified before the Ways and Means Committee that debt reduction is a much better use of surpluses than are tax cuts, stating:

The advantages that I perceive that would accrue to this economy from a significant decline in the outstanding debt to the public and its virtuous cycle on the total budget process is a value which I think far exceeds anything else we could do with the money.

We should follow Chairman Greenspan's advice by making debt reduction the highest priority for any budget surplus.

There has been a lot of discussion here in Washington about a "grand bargain" on the budget that would divide the surplus between tax cuts and higher spending. Our constituents are giving a very different message. I would encourage my colleagues to ignore this inside the beltway speculation, and listen to the American public. Our constituents are telling us to meet our obligations by paying down the national debt.

The folks I represent understand that the conservative thing to do when you have some extra resources is to pay your debts first. They don't understand how we can be talking about grand plans to divide up the budget surplus when we have a \$5.6 trillion national debt. They want us to use this opportunity to pay down our debt.

We hear a lot of talk about "giving the American people their money back". I would remind my colleagues that it is the American people who owe the \$5.6 trillion national debt we have run up. If we are truly interested in giving the surpluses back to the American people, we should start by paying off the debt we have run up on their credit card.

I would suggest that the best tax cut we could provide for all Americans, and the best thing that we can do to ensure that taxes remain low for our children and grandchildren, is to start paying down our \$5.6 trillion national debt. Reducing our national debt will provide a tax cut for millions of Americans by restraining interest rates. Lower interest rates will put money in the pockets of working men and women by saving them money on variable mortgages, new mortgages, auto loans, credit card payments, and other debts. The reduction in interest rates we have had as a result of the fiscal discipline over the last few years has put at least \$35 billion into the hands of homeowners through lower mortgage payments. Continuing this fiscal discipline and paying down the debt is the best way to keep putting money into the hands of middle class Americans.

Just as importantly, reducing the national debt will protect future generations from increasing tax burdens to pay for the debts that we have incurred. Today, more than twenty five percent of all individual income taxes go to paying interest on our national debt. The amount of income taxes the government will have to collect just to pay the interest on the debt will continue to increase unless we take action now to pay down the national debt.

Every dollar of lower debt saves more than one dollar for future generations. These savings that can be used for tax cuts, covering the costs of the baby boomers retirement without tax increases or meeting other needs. We should give future generations the flexibility to deal with the challenges they will face, instead of forcing them to pay higher taxes just to pay for the debt we incurred with our consumption today.

I urge my colleagues to vote against reckless spending by voting against the Republican tax cuts—but let's not stop there. Join me in supporting the Blue Dog Debt Reduction Lockbox bill and let's eliminate our debt.

IN CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL UNITY DAY

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 29, 1999

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the designation of a "National Unity Day" to celebrate our country's diversity as well as promote the need for harmony within our nation.

Presently, my good friend Paul Callens and several of his colleagues are participating in the Unity Walk, a 3,200-mile trek across the United States. This Unity Walk is a means for sending the message to all Americans that we must create racial harmony within our communities at both the local and national levels. The walkers also hope to interest community leaders and local government officials in celebrating a National Unity Day.

Their voyage is scheduled to end in San Francisco on October 10, 1999. The participants hope to engage fellow Americans in worthwhile discussion about the issue of racial harmony. Their ultimate goal, however, is the designation of a National Unity Day commemorating the importance of indivisibility among our diverse group of citizens here in the United States. This would also include an annual National Unity Day celebration to recognize National Unity Day on the second Sunday of October every year.

In our land of great freedom, we must not tolerate racism or prejudice of any kind. We must work together for peace and unity among the citizens of the United States to whom liberty and justice are natural human rights. The Unity Walkers have asked communities to examine their attitudes toward racial differences and make strides toward ending those racial divisions that threaten the soul of our nation.

I ask my colleagues to join with me today in support of the establishment of National Unity Day, as we work to celebrate the differences among us.

CONGRATULATING LION RAISINS GRAND OPENING

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 29, 1999

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Lion Raisins on the Grand

Opening of California's newest raisin processing facility. After four generations, Lion Raisins still strives to deliver quality and service beyond their customer's expectations.

In 1903, Alex Lion established one of the first raisin packing facilities in Fresno, California, named Lion Raisins. He packed raisins for the first time, probably Muscats since that was the principal variety at that time. He shipped them by train to Chicago. The price of raisins dropped while they were in route, causing the buyers to reject them. Alex went by train to Chicago and spent several weeks there selling raisins on the streets. His packing career was somewhat sporadic after that, according to his grandson, Al Lion. The first actual packing was done on the farm that the family owned at Kings and Highland. Later they had a packing house on "H" Street, and then in 1923 or 1926 the packinghouse was built at the present site at California Avenue and Second Street.

During this time Alfred Lion, Alex's son, was living in San Francisco and was involved in the selling there. His father called him back to take an active part in the packing operation. He took over the management after his father's death in 1963.

Brother's Herb and Al entered the family business; Herb in 1947 and Al in 1957. For years, until Herb's retirement in 1991, the brothers shared responsibilities, with one managing the business end of the operation, and the other the packing. They alternated responsibilities every year. In recent years, Al's sons, Larry and John, were active in the business for a time. Larry worked from 1970 to 1981. John worked in the plant from 1974-1975. Herb Lion died in July 1995.

Four generations later, Lion Raisins is the largest family owned and operated raisin processing facility in California. For nearly 100 years, the Lion family has been committed to the raisin industry and a vital part of the San Joaquin Valley. Today Lion Raisins processes nearly 50,000 tons of California raisins annually, and distributes them around the world under the Lion brand label. This has led them to be the largest independent raisin packing company in the area in terms of tonnage packed and sold.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise to congratulate Lion Raisins in the grand opening of California's newest raisin processing facility. Lion Raisins has been a model business, after four generations of delivering quality and service beyond customer expectations; through commitment, pride, and integrity. I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing Lion Raisins many more years of continued success.

TRIBUTE TO ALLEN A. PICKENS

HON. ROBERT A. UNDERWOOD

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 29, 1999

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend and congratulate Mr. Allen A. Pickens on his very distinguished career and well-earned retirement. Through the years, Al has made great contributions toward the development and economic stability of the island